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BULLETIN

OF

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

OF ART

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PERSIAN ENAMELED TILE WORK

ONE of the best examples of this art, in which the Persians have excelled since the time of Darius, is to be found in the group of three panels, consisting of 112 enameled tiles, which were bought by the Museum out of the income of the Rogers Fund in 1903.

These tiles formed part of a dado in the Pavilion of Chehel Sutoon, or the Pavilion of the Forty Columns, at Ispahan, built during the reign of Shah Abbas I, who ruled from 1587 to 1628. Under him Persia regained her lost provinces from Turkey, with the aid of those picturesque soldiers of fortune, Sir Anthony and Sir Robert Shirley, and Abbas' dominions at his death extended from the Tigris to the Indus. Besides his martial achievements, this Shah was particularly successful in encouraging commerce and the arts, and his court, where he received many Christians, was noted for its magnificence.

The three panels give a glimpse into the distinguished Persian life of the epoch.

It may be that actual occurrences are commemorated in them. History tells of the puissance of certain of the ladies of Ispahan, how even the foreign ambassadors were compelled to pay them court. Perhaps in the panel of the center and in that at the left hand some such scene is depicted, in

which the Persian ladies receive salutations and offerings from cavaliers who wear European dress.

The style of the work shows the influence of the Chinese—the designers may have studied in China—but the sentiment is surely Persian. It expresses the pleasures of companionship amid



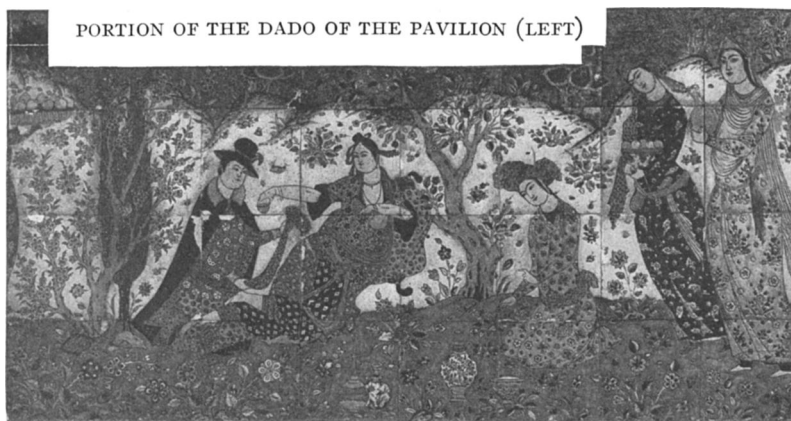
CENTRAL PANEL OF THE DADO OF THE PAVILION
OF CHEHEL SUTOON

pleasant surroundings and the love of cooling drink and refreshment. The color effect of these Persian fêtes champêtres is in itself cooling, blue, green, turquoise, and pale yellow being the predominating shades.

In the central panel, around which a border has been added, a seated lady holds a reception in a garden. Two men in European costume are with her. One respectfully holds his hat in his hand and the other brings an offering. A servant kneeling before the lady offers her pome-

granates and on the flowers and grass at her feet are more fruits and two carafes. The subjects of the other panels are similar.

whose tablet is turned so that the beholders may see the words that he has written. They are a quotation from Hafiz, and the



PORTION OF THE DADO OF THE PAVILION (RIGHT)

The grove or orchard background, running through them all, gives the connection necessary to companion decorations. In the scene at the left a lady reclines on cushions and holds a cup to a kneeling foreigner, while some attendants bring refreshments and another, a bard perhaps, recites some tale or poem. A part of this panel has been lost, as the portion of the figure at the left shows.

There is but one woman in the right hand picture; she carries a covered dish, and flits toward the three men, who seem to be at some serious undertaking. One of them with clasped hands, stands, in a listening attitude, back of the chief figure of the group, who with head erect, gesticulates and seems to dictate to a scribe,

translation reads: "O Queen of Beauty, rescue me from the sorrow of loneliness! Without thee my heart is about to fail; it is true that thou shouldest come back."

B. B.

A SET OF TAPESTRIES

AMONG the tapestries in the collection bequeathed to the Museum in 1892 by Mrs. Elizabeth U. Coles, in memory of her son William F. Coles, is a series of five scenes from the lives of Antony and Cleopatra. These tapestries have been hung in the main hall where they are excellently lighted, and where they can now be studied to advantage. Against the background of the stone walls, and given generous space, they are seen to be excel-